

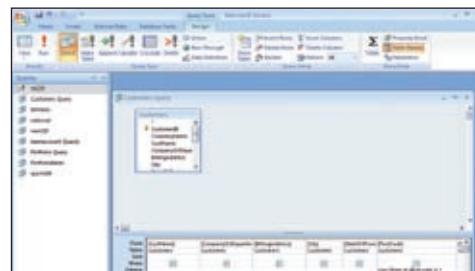
OFFICE HELP

Postcode problems with Access

Q I've got a query in Access that I'd like to change into a parameter query. What I want is to let the end user type the initial three letters of a postcode to bring back records that match an area, so BS1 would return addresses in Bristol city centre, while BS8 would return Clifton. I also want to let the user leave the parameter blank to return all records. How can I do this?

D. Scott

A If you just wanted to use the initial three letters, you could use a parameter called [Start of Postcode] and have a selection criterion of Like [Start of Postcode] & "*". This would work if your users typed the initial three letters of the postcode, and if they didn't type anything it would return everything, because the parameter would be a null string, and that followed by the asterisk would return everything.



▲ Select partial postcodes using a parameter query

One point to note is that postcodes aren't as regular as you assume; BS1 would return Bristol city centre, but it would also return the BS11, BS13 (and so on) postcodes. Make sure your users are aware that they must enter the first block of text in the postcode, whether that is BS1 for Bristol city centre, BS11 for Avonmouth, or even B1 for Birmingham city centre.

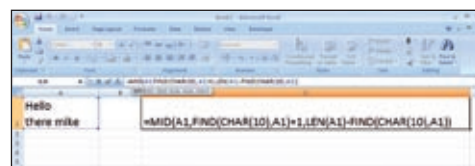
Excel text retrieval

Q I have data that's being entered into Excel, and some of the cells have more than one line of text in them. The users enter the text using Alt and Enter to split the text into two lines. I need to get the second line of text from these cells so it can be used in my VBA macro. I've tried a variety of ways to split the text, such as converting text to columns, but it doesn't seem to work. Is there a way to do this?

E. York

A You can do this with a MID function that looks for the line feed character. This can be found either using CHAR(10), or by using the Visual Basic linefeed constant, vbLf. Both look for the same value in a cell. So you could have:

=MID(A1,FIND(CHAR(10),A1)+1,LEN(A1)-



▲ Use the MID function to split text from a multi-line cell

FIND(CHAR(10),A1))

As you're working within Visual Basic, you could enter:

```
myline=MID(A1,FIND(vbLf,A1)+1,LEN(A1)-FIND(vbLf,A1))
```

The use of the Visual Basic constant makes it obvious what is being done should you, or other programmers, have to maintain the code later, but either will work.

INTRODUCTION

Have you got a spreadsheet that doesn't add up, a Word document that needs a text-formatting macro or a database that's waiting for a report to be written? Don't fret: we're here to help. Just send us your query to the email address below and our resident office applications expert will find your solution. Please provide as much information as you can, including the version of the application you're using, a sample of any data and details of any steps you've already taken to solve the issue.

Kay Ewbank

Database developer and productivity expert Kay Ewbank offers help with office applications.

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Keeping Outlook in view

Q I always have Microsoft Outlook open to manage my appointments, to-do list and emails. Ideally, I'd like a way to have that day's appointments and any unread emails visible even when I've got other applications open, but my other applications occupy the whole screen. Is there a way to have just the Outlook To-Do Bar always show at the front no matter what other applications I open?

Susan Atkinson

A You could set your other applications so that they're not maximised, and alter the amount of space they use to leave enough for Outlook to show through, but an increasingly popular idea is to use a second

screen. This is becoming more acceptable because of the move to LCD monitors, and the fact that you can buy them relatively inexpensively. You'll need to check that your computer can handle a second display, but if it does you can tell Windows XP or Vista to use both monitors. You'll then be able to have Outlook showing on one screen and your other applications on the other.

In Windows XP, you can simply right-click on the desktop and select properties, select the second monitor and tick the box labelled Extend my Windows desktop onto this monitor. In Windows Vista, the way to do this is to right-click the desktop and select Personalization, then Display Properties, and finally Extend the desktop onto this monitor.



▲ Extend your desktop on to a second monitor for more working space

Word replaces my text

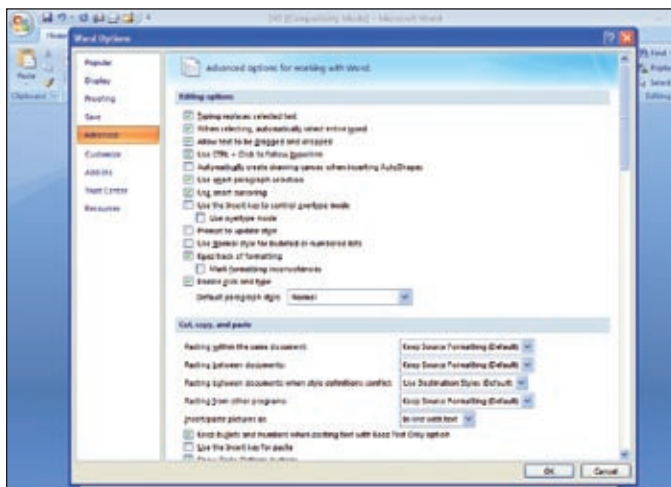
Q I've recently got my first computer and have embarked on writing my memoirs. I'm using Microsoft Word, which sometimes has a problem when I add extra sentences into the copy I've already written, where it replaces my earlier prose with the new text. What's happening, and what can I do to stop it happening?

Amy Wood

A Don't worry, it's not really Word disapproving of your memoirs. I suspect you're accidentally pressing the key labelled **Ins** or **Insert**, which makes Word (and other applications) swap between what's known as **Insert mode** and **Overwrite mode**. In **Insert mode**, text that you type is inserted in between any existing words; in

Overwrite mode, it overwrites the existing text with the new text. I find **Overwrite** a complete nuisance, so I switch it off. You can do this in all versions of Word apart from Word 2007 by altering a setting in the **Tools** menu.

Select **Tools**, **Options**, **Edit**, and in the choices you're shown, make sure the option labelled **Overtyping** mode is unselected. If you're using Word 2007, you shouldn't need to do anything, as the default is for **Overtyping** mode not to be selected. If you suspect it is, or if you want to turn it on, you need to press the **Office** button, then choose **Word Options**, **Advanced**. In the choices there you'll see a box labelled **Use Insert key to control overtype mode**. If you want this choice, select this option; if overtyping is happening and you don't want it, this is the box to deselect.



► Choose **Word Options** in Word 2007 to turn **overwrite mode** on or off

A mouldy but a goody

Q I have been asked to make a survey of moulds, and to catalogue them in a computerised record along with an accompanying image. I am continuing with the survey but I'm having difficulty in producing a computerised record. I have been trying to use an Excel spreadsheet, thinking I could insert a photo in the appropriate cell associated with the **Part No**, but this doesn't seem to work. I've tried to insert the appropriate photo but it just appears on the spreadsheet as per the attached Excel File.

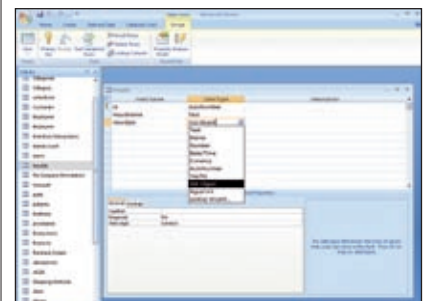
A colleague thought that perhaps a database such as **Access** would be more suitable, and that an individual record sheet should be produced and used for each entry into the database – building up to a full database – and that then a picture could be incorporated in each record sheet. I would be most grateful if you could advise on the best approach to my problem.

David Gibson

A You could achieve the results you want in Excel with user forms, but **Access** would give you many advantages. One of the main benefits of using **Access** is that **Excel** holds all the information for a spreadsheet in memory, so as you add more images, the spreadsheet gets ever larger and **Excel** will work more and more slowly. **Access**, by contrast, loads only the information you're actually working with. You also get the added advantage that you can easily look at the data in different sort orders, and you can produce a variety of reports to show subsets of the information in appropriate ways.

What you need to do is to create a table in **Access** with all the fields you need to classify your moulds, and a field type of **OLE Object** for holding the images. Then create a form in which to view your data. If you use the **Access** form wizard, you'll get a form with a box for your **OLE object**, though it may not be large enough to show the entire image.

When you want to create a record for an additional mould, right-click on the **OLE field**, and choose **Insert Object**. In the dialog that appears, choose **Create from File**, and browse until you find the image you want to save. You will then have the image of your mould available as part of the details. **CS**



▲ Use an **OLE Object** field to hold images in **Access** databases

A quick quote query

Q I need to add quote marks to text quite regularly. Is there an easy way to add a macro where I select a bit of text and press, for example, **CTRL-Q** or **CTRL-9**, and have Word add quote marks or brackets to the selected text?

Hugh Minney

A Word makes this quite simple to do in macros by providing you with code to refer to the current selection:

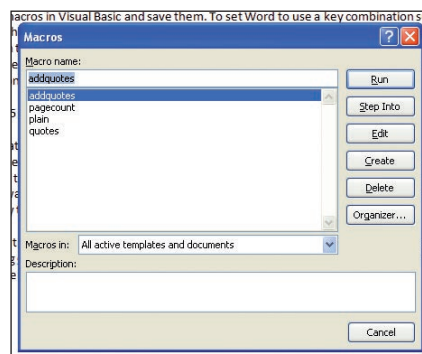
```
Sub addquotes()  
origtext = Selection  
newtext = """" & origtext & """"  
Selection.Text = newtext  
End Sub
```

```
Sub addbrackets()  
origtext = Selection  
newtext = "(" & origtext & ")"  
Selection.Text = newtext  
End Sub
```

The only point to note is that in the **addquotes** macro, you need to put four double quotes to make sure the macro knows you want to add

one set to the text. Enter the macros in **Visual Basic** and save them.

To set Word to use a key combination such as **Ctrl-Q** for one of the macros, choose **Tools**, **Options**, **Customise**, then select **Customise** keyboard. If you scroll down through the list of commands shown, you'll find the section for macros, and can highlight the macro for which you want to use the keyboard short cut. You can then press the key combination you want to use.



▲ Use a macro to automatically add quotes to selected text